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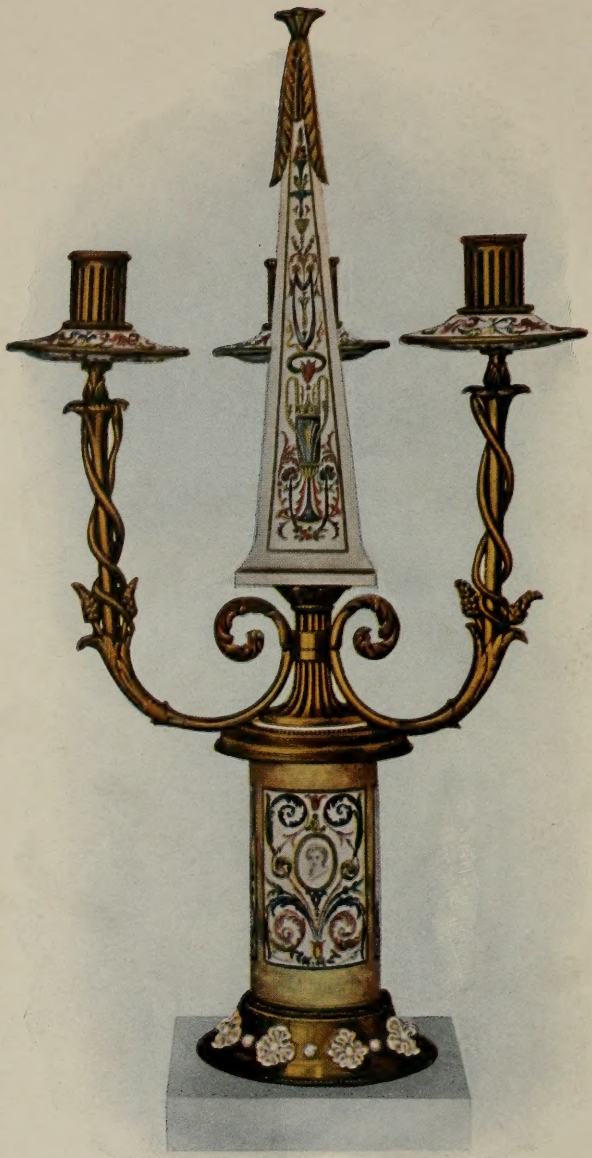

CANDELABRUM
Buen Retiro Porcelain
About 1780
(See Nos. 13 and 14, pages 21 and 22)

Cat
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SPANISH PORCELAINS
AND
TERRA COTTAS

IN THE COLLECTION OF

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BY

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AND

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SPANISH PORCELAINS AND TERRA COTTAS

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

WHEN Charles III. succeeded to the throne of Spain, in 1759, many of the best artists and workmen from the Capo di Monte factory were taken from Naples for the purpose of establishing a similar fabrique at Madrid.

Riaño,* who had access to the documents preserved in the State archives, states that before the king departed from Naples, "he ordered the following letter to be written to the Secretary of State, Richard Wall, on September 11, 1759: 'Likewise the workmen and utensils used at the royal manufactory of porcelain of Capo di Monte must be embarked from Naples to Alicant, in the vessels prepared for that purpose, in order to continue from there the

**The Industrial Arts in Spain.*

journey to Madrid. The necessary conveyances are to be provided, and the expenses to be charged to his Majesty's account.' "

Riaño gives a list of names of fifty-two modelers, painters and workmen, who arrived from Naples. The spot selected for the porcelain manufactory was inside the gardens of the royal palace at Buen Retiro, in the vicinity of Madrid.

Quoting from Riaño: "Larruga, in his 'Memorias,' says that as soon as the building was finished (in 1760), china was made under the superintendence of Don Cayetano Schepers; the works, during his superintendence, proved very unsatisfactory, to his great astonishment, as the same process and workmen were employed as at Naples. Schepers attributes it to squabbles between the Spanish and Italian workmen. Sebastian Schepers, from 1783, a son of Cayetano's, tried various experiments with different clays of the country.

"The porcelain made at Buen Retiro was kept for the first thirty years for the exclusive use of the royal family, or to be sent as presents to foreign courts. Nothing was offered for sale until January, 1789, after Charles III's death, 1788, when Charles IV. determined that the china manufactured at Buen Retiro might be sold. Even in Spain the specimens

of this china are very scarce; it is only at the palaces of Madrid, Aranjuez, the Escorial and La Granja that an idea can be formed of the perfection of this manufacture. . . .

"Every kind of porcelain was made at Buen Retiro, hard and soft paste, white china, glazed or unglazed, or painted and modelled in the style of Capo di Monte. A great many existed imitating the blue jasper of Wedgwood, and they also made flowers, coloured and biscuit, groups, and single figures, and painted porcelain of different kinds. . . . The finest specimens which exist are in the Neapolitan style, and are two rooms at the palaces of Madrid and Aranjuez of which the walls are completely covered with china plaques and looking-glasses, modelled in the most admirable manner with figures, fruits, and flowers. The room at Aranjuez is covered with a bold ornamentation of figures in the Japanese style, in high relief, painted with colours and gold with the most exquisite details. The figures unite the fine Italian modelling with the Japanese decoration. The chandelier is in the same style. Upon a vase on the wainscot to the right of the entrance door is the following inscription:

JOSEPH
GRICCI
DELINEAVit
ET
SCULit
1763.

This same date is repeated in the angles, and in some shields near the roof we find,

AÑO
1765;

probably the year the work was terminated. . . .

"From the establishment of the manufactory in 1759 by Charles III. until 1803 the styles adopted at Capo di Monte had been followed. At the beginning of this century Dn. Bartolomé Sureda went to Paris to learn the manner in which Sèvres porcelain was made. On his return in 1803 he was appointed director of the works at Buen Retiro and endeavoured to imitate the paste and brilliancy of decoration of Sèvres. Two workmen came over from Paris — Victor Perche and Vivien. . . .

"When the French made their entry into Madrid in the spring of 1808 they took possession of the position occupied by the royal manufactory. In July

of the same year it continued in the hands of the French, who forced open the doors of the laboratory. Porcelain continued, however, to be made there during the reign of Joseph I.; we find in 'Travels through Spain and part of Portugal,' London, 1808, p. 23, that, the author says, 'the gardens of the Buen Retiro are open to the public. In the neighbourhood of these the royal porcelain manufacture is carried on in a large white building.' Lord Blayney, in his 'Narrative of a Journey through Spain and France in 1810-1814,' London, 1814, says that 'the royal manufactures of tapestry and porcelain have declined since the death of Charles III. and have now entirely ceased.'

"We find in 'Paseos por Madrid,' Madrid, 1815-8, p. 87, it stated that 'The English, at the second entry of our troops in Madrid, ruined this building in order that it should not be used as a fortress by the French troops.'

"Richard Ford, in his 'Handbook for Travellers in Spain,' London, 1845, says, 'Everything was destroyed by the invaders, who turned the manufactory into a fortification, which surrendered with 200 cannon, Aug. 14th, 1812, to the Duke of Wellington. Ferdinand VII., on his restoration, re-created La

China, removing the workshops and ware rooms to the Moneloa.' "*

Writers on ceramic art have followed each other in the assertion that the porcelain of Buen Retiro presents many points of similarity in paste and glaze to that of Capo di Monte, since the modelers, decorators, and potters brought from that factory to Spain by Charles III. would probably continue to pursue the same methods there. This supposition, however, is entirely at variance with the facts, since both the *pate tendre,* or soft paste, and the later hard paste of the two establishments are quite dissimilar in appearance and color, the result of different conditions and environment. The clays and other materials found available for the manufacture in Spain were of an entirely different quality from those used in Italy.

The early soft paste of Buen Retiro is more diaphanous than that of Capo di Monte, which latter is whiter and more chalky in appearance. The former possesses more of a waxy quality than is found in other *pate tendre* porcelains, and is frequently of a pronounced greenish tint. The decorations are subdued in coloring, a rose or lake being particularly

*Moncloa, near Madrid.

characteristic. Another marked peculiarity is the gilded traceries around the edges. Later on, the soft paste became whiter and coarser in texture. The hard paste porcelain of Buen Retiro likewise bears no resemblance to that of Naples, being of a much whiter tint and of finer texture. Since some of the modelers and painters worked at both factories, there is more or less similarity in the treatment of groups and figures produced at both establishments, and in their decoration. It is necessary, therefore, to study the pastes to distinguish the one product from the other.

CATALOGUE

I

PORCELAIN OF THE BUEN RETIRO, MADRID, SPAIN

1-8. PLATES (8)

Diameter, 10 inches.

Artificial soft paste (fritted), thick and heavy. Waving, hexagonal outline. Decorated with floral designs in colors, touched with gold. A heavy line of gold bordering the guttered edge. On back the fleur-de-lis mark in blue. About 1770. PLATE I

9. SNUFF BOX

Diameter, 2½ inches.

Artificial soft paste. Modeled in form of shells overlapping each other in hemispherical form, with flattened lid in the semblance of a clam shell. Small shells in relief scattered over the surface and covered with gold. Interior of box solidly gilded. The inside of the gold-

mounted and hinged lid is covered with a figure scene painted in subdued coloring — a lady with fan conversing with a gentleman; trees in background.

Early period, 1760–1770. PLATE II

10. SNUFF BOX

Diameter, 3 inches.

Artificial soft paste. Conventionalized shell form, standing on narrow flattened base on which is a miniature painting of Apollo riding a dolphin, followed by other dolphins. The outside of the gold hinged lid is covered with small sea-shells in colored relief. Interior of the box solidly gilded. The inside of lid is painted with a marine figure scene — The Loves of the Sea Gods — a sea monster with human body and head bearing away a woman, while an amorino is seated on the monster's tail, and at the left a satyr is blowing a conch shell.

Early period, 1760–1770. PLATE II

11. FIGURE

Height, 7¼ inches.

Artificial soft paste. A crouching woman seated on a rock, with upraised hand holding a key. In front, a large tureen or vase with cover raised in front, for holding comfits. Fleur-de-lis mark in blue on base.

Late period, 1780–1790. PLATE III

1-8. PORCELAIN PLATE
Buen Retiro, about 1770

9. Snuff Box
Buen Retiro

10. Snuff Box
Buen Retiro

11. Comfit Box
Buen Retiro

12. GROUP

Height, 6½ inches.

Artificial soft paste. Figures of a man and woman standing on either side of a rectangular pedestal, representing Summer and Autumn. The woman carries in her caught-up skirt a bundle of wheat. The man holds in one hand, supported by the pedestal, a vase, while in the other he holds aloft a bunch of grapes. The robes of the figures are touched with gold and blue, while the flesh parts are delicately stippled. The front of the pedestal is decorated with a bird and foliage in heavy gilding on a dark blue ground, surrounded by a frame in relief gilding. Mark on base, a fleur-de-lis in blue.

Late period, 1780–1790. PLATE IV

13. CANDELABRUM

Height, 22½ inches.

Artificial soft paste. A cylindrical column, standing on a plinth 6½ inches square, supporting three arms surmounted by a slender three-sided pyramid of porcelain decorated with conventional arabesque designs in colors. The three bobeches are of porcelain at the ends of the ormolu arms. The column is painted in brown with the figure of a man wearing a cape and boots, and blowing a double pipe. On reverse the head of a man in brown surrounded by a gold frame, and scrolled ornamentation in col-

ors. Ormolu mounts at base and top of column and at point of pyramid. On base fleur-de-lis mark in blue.

Louis XVI. period, about 1780. *See Frontispiece.*

14. CANDELABRUM

Companion to preceding. Similarly decorated, except the subject of the front panel of the column, on which is a man with raised wand and at his feet a bird.

15, 16. VASES (Pair)

Height, 8¼ inches.

Artificial soft paste. Broad, inverted pear shape. Sides vertically ribbed by overlapping strips. Handles in form of grape stalks, with vines and clusters of grapes in natural colors and full relief, extending around the neck. On base the fleur-de-lis mark in blue.

Late period, 1780–1790. PLATE V

17. VASE

Height, 18¼ inches.

Artificial soft paste, of waxy quality. Jar with dome-shaped cover. Decorated with figure scene, painted in deep rose or lake — a woman leaning against a tree, with a distaff in her hand. A naked boy asleep at her side, a man reclining

12. GROUP (SUMMER AND AUTUMN)
Buen Retiro

15. 16. Pair of Porcelain Vases
Buen Retiro, 1780-1790

17. Vase (Two Views)
Buen Retiro, 1760-1765

on the ground, with flute in hand. On reverse a boy asleep at the base of a ruined wall, with a guitar beside him, while a woman watches near by. Around neck and edge of cover gilded traceries, which are characteristic of this period. On base fleur-de-lis in blue.

Early period, 1760–1765. PLATE VI

II

CAPO DI MONTE

The complete history of the porcelain manufactory projected at Capo di Monte, near Naples, Italy, in 1739, by Charles Bourbon, Duke of Parma and King of Naples and Sicily, has yet to be written. It is known that experiments in clays and pastes were carried on for several years before the buildings were finished and the making of porcelain began, which was not until 1743. The first period extended from that date until 1759, when Charles succeeded to the throne of Spain. Artificial soft paste porcelain was first attempted, but it is uncertain whether the manufacture of hard paste was commenced under the patronage of Charles III. or at a later date.

The second period began in 1760, under Ferdinand IV. of Naples, son of Charles III. On the departure of the latter for Spain in 1759, the Capo

di Monte works were dismantled and partially destroyed. The manufacture does not appear to have been resumed there, but a sufficient amount of ware remained on hand to supply the demand for several years.

In 1771 the new porcelain works were established at Portici, some five miles southeast of Naples, on the bay. In the following year plans were prepared for the removal of the works to Naples, which was accomplished soon after.

During the second period (1759-1821), hard paste porcelain was manufactured in great abundance, and the production of soft paste continued only in a spasmodic manner.

The mark most commonly used on the soft paste of the early period of Capo di Monte was the crowned N. It was seldom, if ever, used on the hard paste, decorated with reliefs, of the second period, which latter does not appear to have been marked at all. Modern forgeries of this late ware, however, are almost invariably so marked, and the presence of this mark on hard paste is an almost infallible indication that the piece is a forgery.

In the books on potters' marks the fleur-de-lis is given as one of the early Capo di Monte marks, but there seems to be little, if any, basis for this supposition. In our many years of study of Capo di Monte wares we have never seen a single example so marked.

The hard porcelain of the second period, or late eighteenth century, possesses several distinguishing

18. Group (Christ Mourned)
Capo di Monte

19. Group (The Empty Tomb)
Capo di Monte

characteristics by which it may be readily recognized. The paste is rather coarse and the glaze is of a grayish or bluish-green tint, which, when placed in comparison with pure white porcelain, as that of Sèvres, is quite pronounced. The relief decorations are well modeled, clear cut and sharp, the human figures being slender and elongated, while the flesh tints are daintily stippled, as in miniature painting. Where gilding is used, it is found to be applied over red color, in the manner of Italian and French furniture of the eighteenth century.

Two fine groups of hard paste Capo di Monte, made in the latter half of the eighteenth century, after the works had been re-established at Naples, are exhibited in connection with the Buen Retiro porcelain, as prototypes of the latter and for purposes of comparison.

18. GROUP (CHRIST MOURNED)

Length, 25 inches; width, 9½ inches; height, 15 inches.

The dead Christ recumbent, the weeping Mary seated above Him on a rock, in the attitude of bending down and looking into His face, one arm outstretched behind her, the other holding a napkin with which to wipe away the blood. At His feet an angel is kneeling with outstretched arms.

The figures are beautifully modeled and evidently the work of a noted sculptor. The

coloring is exquisite in tone, the flesh tints being delicately stippled. Mary wears a dark red garment over which is a purple robe which has fallen to her waist. The angel wears draperies of green and white, lined with purple. The figure of Christ is partially covered with a white drapery. The gilding, which edges Mary's headdress and robe, is applied over red, in the usual Capo di Monte manner.

Hard paste porcelain of grayish tint. Capo di Monte of the second period. Unmarked. Late eighteenth century. PLATE VII

19. GROUP (THE EMPTY TOMB)

Length, 26 inches; width, 14½ inches; height, 27 inches.

Christ's sepulchre, or empty tomb, of rectangular form, standing on four rococo modeled feet. The cover is raised at one side, the other side having fallen in. Suspended in front is an angel holding a napkin to his weeping eyes. A cherub, with yellow drapery, stands on the edge, grasping the grave clothes which a second cherub, suspended above, is bearing from the tomb. The angel wears a loose green drapery. The wings of the cherubs are painted in polychrome. The casket itself is marbled in purple and yellow.

The modeling of this group was done by another sculptor. While the two pieces were probably executed independently, they fittingly

20. Group (The Holy Family)
Seville

21. Group (The Holy Family)
Seville

supplement each other in illustrating the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

Hard paste porcelain, of grayish tint. Capo di Monte, of the second period.

Late eighteenth century. PLATE VIII

III

SPANISH TERRA COTTAS

20. GROUP (THE HOLY FAMILY)

Length, 17 inches.

The Virgin seated, with Child on knee; Joseph standing in background, and a woman kneeling in adoration. An angel stands at one side, offering gifts. Cherubs surround Mary's feet. The modeling is particularly fine. The figures are painted in dull reds and browns.

Marked Doña Luisa Roldan, Es.

This sculptor was a daughter of Pedro Roldan, a famous carver and sculptor, who was born in 1624, and belonged to a distinguished family of Seville. Doña Luisa was noted for her modeling of small figures and groups. In the hospital in Cadiz is a good example of her more important work — a Magdalen supported by an angel. Her work belongs to the latter half of the seventeenth century. PLATE IX

21. GROUP (THE HOLY FAMILY)

Length, 18 inches.

The Virgin seated, with Child on knee: Joseph kneeling in adoration. An angel is offering gifts. Above Mary's head are three cherubs. In the background stands an ass. The colors are dull red, blue, and brown.

The piece is not marked and may be of slightly later date than the preceding. It may be attributed to the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century. PLATE X

22. GROUP

Similar in treatment to preceding but of more recent date, probably nineteenth century. A dying woman surrounded by ministering angels and cherubs.

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